



The

STRAIGHT ARROW

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO SERVE PEOPLE



Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2003

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Editor's Note: As this issue was going to press, Third District Supervisor Dennis Hansberger was elected Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

Fred Aguiar

Chairman, Board of Supervisors



Fred Aguiar

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy new year. This is also a good opportunity to thank each of you for making my two years as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors very productive and gratifying. This time was remarkable because of how much we overcame, and how quickly we did it.

At this time two years ago we were still reeling from scandal. Our civil lawsuit against the corruption figures was well under way, and we had already secured some significant settlements. But the County of San Bernardino was seldom mentioned in the news media or in our communities outside of the context of this controversy.

That certainly is not the case today.

The subject will continue to occasionally come up as we pursue legal action against those who so grossly abused our trust. For the most part, though, the county gets far more attention for the superior public service you provide.

During the past two years, we have expanded services for children and seniors, strengthened public safety, made government much more accessible to the public, and hired many dynamic new leaders.

We provided energy assistance to thousands of residents during the energy crisis. We secured funding for and have begun construction on a brand-new juvenile hall in the High Desert while completing work on an expanded juvenile hall in Rancho Cucamonga. Tens of thousands of county residents are now able to watch Board of Supervisors meetings at home.

(Continued on page 6)

Aguiar and Biane take the oath of office

One member of the Board of Supervisors began his second term in office and another member began his first term during ceremonies at the County Government Center on December 2.

Fourth District voters in March re-elected Supervisor Fred Aguiar. In November, Second District voters selected Rancho Cucamonga Councilman Paul Biane to succeed Jon Mikels on the county Board.

After taking the oath of office, Aguiar thanked his wife Patti and daughter Amy for their support during his 24 years of public service. Aguiar also thanked his fellow supervisors and all of the county's more than 18,000 employees for assisting him in his efforts on the Board.

"I've appreciated all the support that I got not just from the members of this Board but from the county employees and the residents of this county and all of the elected officials in the County of San Bernardino," Aguiar said. "I appreciate all of your efforts to make this county a much better place to live, work, and play."

Supervisor Biane thanked his family as well, particularly his wife Lea for enduring the rigors of campaigning. Supervisor Biane also acknowledged the vital role county employees play in making the Inland Empire a great place to live and work.

"Treating the employees here with respect and fairness from the Board and to be rewarded for their hard work and dedication is going to be very important in my tenure on the Board," he said.

Supervisor Biane also pledged to improve the county's relationship with the cities and communities of the Second District, and he thanked former Supervisor Mikels for his years of service on the Board.

More information on Supervisors Aguiar and Biane and the other members of the Board of Supervisors can be found on the county's web site at www.sbcounty.gov.



Second District Supervisor Paul Biane

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New program "Bridges" the gap

By Miles Wagner, Program Specialist I, DAAS Administration

Aging and Adult Services, together with the Probation Department, have completed the long-awaited agreement starting the **Bridges Program**. Mary Sawicki, Director of Aging and Adult Services, and Ray Wingerd, Chief Probation Officer, signed the agreement at the Aging and Adult Services administrative office.

The Bridges Program provides exterior yard and home cleanup to seniors and dependent adults in San Bernardino County. There is no cost to the resident for the service. This service is filling a historic need for assistance to seniors and dependent adults in complying with weed abatement and enforcement actions by Code Enforcement Officers within the county.

Services are provided on an as-needed basis but are not intended for recurring maintenance or cleaning. Routine yard maintenance is not part of the Bridges Program.

The Bridges Program is run by the Probation Department and uses nonviolent first-time offenders as laborers. The goal of the program is to teach young adults responsibility, work ethics, and the value of community assistance. Prior partners working with the youths are Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, the County of San Bernardino Parks and Recreation Department and other local government agencies and nonprofit groups.

Young adults are available Saturday and Sunday during the school year and seven days a week during summer months. Young adults participating in this program are always under substantial supervision of Deputy Probation Officers.

This program may be combined with other assistance programs offered by local cities and the county and the Department of Aging and Adult Services. Assistance in trash hauling may be arranged through several sources.

Applications are available through Adult Protective Services or Senior Information and Assistance staff by calling 1-800-510-2020. Questions about the Bridges Program can be sent to DAAS Administration through your supervisor. ♦



Ray Wingerd and Mary Sawicki sign the Bridges Program agreement.

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The Straight Arrow is a monthly publication produced by the County of San Bernardino Administrative Office in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors for the employees of the County of San Bernardino. Submissions and story ideas are encouraged and can be sent to the editor via e-mail at dwert@cao.sbcounty.gov

Human Resources now has Victorville office

The Department of Human Resources has opened up a regional office in Victorville. Individuals interested in county employment will be able to obtain information about County job opportunities and submit applications at this office. Some employment testing will also be conducted at this office.

Office hours will be Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The office is located at:

17270 Bear Valley Road, Suite 107

Victorville, CA 92392

Telephone number is (760) 843-5138

This office will be shared with PERC and training will also be available at this facility. ♦



Measure I helps San Bernardino County address growth, transportation needs

By Cheryl Donahue, Public Information Officer – SANBAG

It's no secret that San Bernardino County is growing by leaps and bounds. The 2000 Census shows that 291,000 more people began calling the county home during the past decade. That 20 percent growth is being seen all over the county, too. Highland's population increased by 30 percent, Fontana's climbed 47 percent, Adelanto's grew 113 percent, and Chino Hills – 142 percent.

While population growth does have its economic benefits, it takes its toll on local transportation systems. San Bernardino County is struggling to keep up with the heavy demands placed on freeways and local streets. San Bernardino Associated Governments, also known as SANBAG, is the agency responsible for transportation and regional planning in San Bernardino County. SANBAG is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for area residents by improving the transportation network of freeways, roads, rail and public transit.

Providing the financial backbone of these improvements is Measure I, the half-cent transportation sales tax adopted by San Bernardino County voters in 1989. Given the dramatic growth experienced countywide since that time, voters helped to pass this tax at the right time.

Receipts from Measure I have provided a wide range of transportation improvements, and more are on the way. The SANBAG Board of Directors also voted July 3 to establish November 2004 as the target date for placing a renewal measure on the ballot to prepare for improvements that will be needed once Measure I expires in 2009.

Completed or ongoing Measure I projects include:

- Widening and adding carpool lanes on State Route 60 between the San Bernardino/Los Angeles County line and Interstate 15. This 10-mile project was opened to traffic in 1997.
- Building the Chino Valley Freeway, State Route 71, through Chino and Chino Hills. Finished in 1997, this new freeway stretches 8.5 miles.
- Constructing carpool lanes on Interstate 10 between the county line and Interstate 15. Extending nearly 10 miles, these lanes were completed in 2000.



210 Freeway



Sierra Way

➤ Developing the Metrolink train system in this region for commuters and fun-seekers. The San Bernardino-Los Angeles line opened in 1992, followed by the Inland Empire-Orange County line in 1995.

➤ Providing ongoing financial support for public transit providers throughout the county, including Omnitrans, Barstow Area Transit, Morongo Basin Transit Authority, Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority, Needles Area Transit and Victor Valley Transit Authority. This support provides lower bus fares for elderly and disabled riders.

➤ Funding for major street improvements countywide. More than \$22.5 million in Measure I funds are returned each year to individual cities and unincorporated areas throughout the county. Funds are used for adding or widening streets, building bridges, maintaining pavement, installing new traffic signals and repairing sidewalks. City councils or county supervisors make decisions about how these funds are spent, according to five-year plans that are adopted for each jurisdiction. Audits are conducted yearly to verify that funds are spent properly.

Other Measure I projects that are underway or will be starting within the next two years include:

- Construction of State Route 210 in Rialto and San Bernardino. Six miles of this new freeway opened last summer between Rancho Cucamonga and Fontana. Fourteen additional miles will open this fall in La Verne, Claremont, Upland and Rancho Cucamonga. The Rialto and San Bernardino sections, which total eight miles, are expected to be complete in 2006.
- Adding a truck-climbing lane eastbound on Interstate 10 between Ford Street in Redlands and Live Oak Canyon Road in Yucaipa. This 3.7-mile project is expected to start in March 2003 and last 18 months.
- Expanding Interstate 10 one lane in each direction between Orange Street and Ford Street in Redlands, approximately 2.5 miles. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-2004 and be complete by late 2006.
- Widening Interstate 215 north of I-10 by adding a carpool lane in each direction through San Bernardino, a total of six miles. Construction is set to begin in mid-2004. Environmental studies are planned for widening this freeway south of I-10 through Colton and Grand Terrace, a four-mile stretch. ♦

The Children and Families Commission for San Bernardino County ensures a healthy tomorrow for our children

The Children and Families Commission for San Bernardino County (CFC) has made a tremendous difference in the lives of young children, prenatal to age five, in this county by contracting with service delivery experts countywide. The results are impressive: high-risk infants get much needed preventive care, pregnant moms and expectant dads get the latest information on how kids learn and grow, and childcare options become more accessible for working parents. These are but a few examples of the recent accomplishments of the Commission.

CFC funding is provided to agencies serving our youngest children because research in brain development shows that the experiences of children in their earliest years significantly affect the way they grow and develop. Positive results in the early years impact dramatically on their physical, mental, emotional and social development. This, in turn, reduces the social and financial costs of services the children might need in later years.

"A child's life is like a piece of paper on which everyone who passes by leaves an impression."
— Chinese Proverb

"The first years of life — from before birth up to five years of age — are the most important for brain development," said Don Larkin, executive director of the Children and Families Commission. "Investments in these early childhood years will give our children a strong foundation for their future."

Since its inception in 1998, the Commission has allocated more than \$45 million to serving young children and their families throughout San Bernardino County. Recently the Children and Families Commission approved recommendations to contract with 56 agencies to provide quality services for over 378,000 children prenatal to age five, their families and providers. The contracts will total nearly \$55 million for the next two fiscal years (2002-2004).

Another significant program of the Commission is the distribution of the FREE *Kit for New Parents*, a how-to parent resource kit filled with information based on the latest scientific discoveries about how infants learn and grow. This tremendous resource contains videos, easy-to-read pamphlets, a parent guide, and a child's book to promote early literacy. New parent, Dina Gonzalez, indicates that although she attended several prenatal classes before the birth of her son, she worried that she might not be able to remember everything she had learned once her baby was born. Then she received the *Kit for New Parents*, and according to Dina, "all the information was there when I needed it." Bulk orders are available by calling the Commission office at 909.386.7706 or individual kits can be ordered from the State Commission by calling 800.KIDS.025 (English) or 800.50.NINOS (Spanish).

A seven-member Commission makes final funding and program decisions based on their vast and varied expertise. The Board of Supervisors appoints the panel of Commissioners and current members include:

- **Bill Postmus, Chairman**, Board of Supervisors
- **Thomas J. Prendergast, M.D., Vice Chair**, Director of Public Health
- **Carol Anselmi**, Assistant Administrative Officer, County Human Services System
- **Sue Ovitt**, Championship Management, Event Coordinator
- **Loren Sanchez, Ed. D.**, School Superintendent – Retired
- **Ann Davis-Schultz**, Grant Coordinator, Redlands Unified School District
- **Guillermo Valenzuela, M.D.**, San Bernardino County Medical Society

The Commission was created in 1998 in order to realize the benefits of

Proposition 10 (California Children and Families Act) for the purpose of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of infants and young children. The programs of the Commission are paid for by a tax on tobacco products. Funding decisions are made based on the current strategic plan and community assessments of strengths, needs and resources. Commission meetings are held monthly, and the public is encouraged to attend and provide input. Together, all of us can make a difference!

For additional information about the Commission please contact our office at 909.386.7706 or visit our website at www.sanbernardinokids.org.



Commissioner Loren Sanchez talking about the value of the Kit for New Parents at the Rancho Cucamonga Health and Safety Fair held in April 2002.



The Kit for New Parents, being distributed to every new parent in the county, includes numerous quality resources such as videos, brochures and books.

"In short, the habits we form from childhood make no small difference, but rather they make all the difference."

— Aristotle





AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Great Ideas Group of the Jobs and Employment Services Department wins NACo award

Submitted by Patsy Studdard, Program Specialist



The Great Ideas Group of the Jobs and Employment Services Department (JESD) has received the National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award for 2002. The NACo Achievement Award Program is a non-competitive program that recognizes counties for improving the management of and services

provided by county government. In honor of the NACo Award, the Board of Supervisors presented the group with a resolution recognizing JESD's efforts to "improve working conditions and customer service."

The Great Ideas Group (GIG) is a "Continuous Improvement" program consisting of a multilevel group of JESD staff. The group brainstorms solutions to department problems and makes recommendations to management for solving the problems. Since its inception, the GIG has made 31 recommendations to JESD management, 25 of which have been approved and implemented. These recommendations have included the establishment of a formal Staff Recognition Program as well as many new efforts to improve our customer service. Membership in the group is fluid as staff members come and go as their work schedules permit participation. So far, more than 10% of our staff has participated in this process thus ensuring that the ideas will remain fresh and innovative.

If you are interested in "Continuous Improvement" or have any questions about the Great Ideas Group at JESD, please contact the JESD START Unit at (909) 433-3471. ♦



Representatives of the JESD Great Ideas Group received a Board of Supervisors resolution honor of the NACo Achievement Award 2002 for the JESD Continuous Improvement Program. Left to right are Cassandra Andrews, Patsy Studdard, Nick Longo, Stacey Simon, Durinda Taylor, Paula Deter, Taniesha King, Lynn Neuenswander, and Fred Moll.

New Contracts Support Unit

As part of the continuing effort to improve county procedures, the Board of Supervisors discussed the establishment of a Central Contracts Unit within the County. At that time, the Board directed the Procurement and Contracting Working Group to conduct a survey of departments.

Essentially, the survey showed a divergence between the departments who have staff dedicated to procurement and contracting and those who do not. Departments with contracting staff saw a central contract unit as unimportant to their functioning and if optional, would use it infrequently. In departments without contracting staff, the need was defined more important and the use more frequent. Departments stated a preference that a contract support function be available to provide assistance, answer questions (help line), keep boilerplate language, maintain updated County policies and procedures on a website, and provide formal Request For Proposal (RFP) training. These services were currently being provided through the Purchasing Department although on a limited basis, due to staffing.

The Board of Supervisors then authorized a contract support function within the Purchasing Department. Staff would provide

procurement and contracting assistance to requesting departments for the purchase of goods and services. Additionally, they would work with County Counsel to develop contract standards, develop a training program for RFPs and contracts, establish a user group to provide ongoing support, and track the RFPs and contracts that are reviewed by this functional unit.

Terri Bishop was selected as Contracts Administrator for this newly established unit. Terri has been on loan to Purchasing from JESD providing assistance to the Buyers and county departments in preparing RFPs and contracts. Assisting her will be Betty Alexander and Allen Sanchez, both recently promoted to Contracts Analysts.

This is an exciting opportunity for Terri, Betty and Allen, as this is a new unit with lots of potential. Their experience, technical knowledge, and organizational skills will be a positive asset to the Contracts Support Unit, Purchasing and County Departments.

If you need assistance with an RFP, or have questions about procurement practices and policies call (909) 387-2069. ♦

Challenge Cup Relay Baker to Vegas XVIII

By Bill Stevenson, DDII

For the sixth consecutive year, the Probation Department answered the challenge and fielded an entry in the grueling Challenge Cup Relay Baker to Vegas event. So did more than 200 other Law Enforcement Agencies throughout the United States.

The challenge is simple. Take twenty runners from any law enforcement agency and sprinkle them relay-style over a 120-mile course on back roads from Baker, California, to Las Vegas, Nevada. Then, on Saturday night, just outside of Baker, give the first runner in each team a little stick, point them in the right direction and send them on their way. The challenge then, is to see how quickly the twenty runners can get their little stick to the Rio in Vegas.

The challenge is an enormously complex undertaking. Planning, funding, and training begin months in advance of the event. The necessary cast includes runners, alternates, coaches, drivers, timers, catchers, captains, sponsors and patient (if not understanding) families and bosses. Although the run's logistics include contingency planning and built-in redundancy, there is always the possibility that one member might fail to do his or her assigned part, and then the whole enterprise collapses. That happens to a number of teams every year. For most however, throughout the night and into the next morning, the runners battle the terrain, the elements, each other and themselves to move the stick. Come sunup, the first teams begin to end the ordeal and by noon, it's all over.

Challenged to Excellence
PROBATION
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

OK already. How did we do? We compete in divisions: we came 10th of 29 in ours, which was good enough for a trophy mug (top 50% receive awards). More important is our overall performance. We set a new team best time of 16 hours, 36 minutes and 3 seconds. That time bested San Bernardino, Riverside, Redlands, Colton, Rialto and Fontana PD and was good enough for 80th place out of more than 200 teams. We moved up twenty places in the overall race this year and 83 places in the last two years!

Plans are already underway to return to the desert next year. However, it is only right to thank and congratulate those people and groups that made this year's effort the tremendous success that it was. They are: Robert Bloie, Brenda Granado, Bill Forester, Milt Sheetz, Fernando Hernandez, Holiday Rock, Luciano Perez, Daniel Reyes, Michael Watts, Oleg Llaurodo, Segio Madrid, SBCSEA, Steve Vasquez, Carlos Corona, Dan Bautista, Leisa Moseley, Ray Walker, Nichole Nunez, Rosie Puentes, Bill Stevenson, Samantha Gonzales, Monica Stidham, Zeke Moseley, Marixa Mathews, PEA, Jerelyn Hawkins, Gregory White, Marti Lupear, Rebecca Suarez, Martha Guillen, Joe Johnson, Benjamin Duran, Russell Perry, Evelyn McCorkle, Pat Norris, Patricia Dorame, Ron Martinelli, Kory Oberlies, Carl Landry, Bart Moreno, Francisco Carranza, Alicia Martinez, Tiffani Lawyer, Don Viser and Juan Avila. ♦



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER *(Continued from page 1)*

Most of you are probably not aware of one of the accomplishments for which we should be very proud – the ExCL Program, which stands for excellence, customer service, and leadership.

The program began as a series of meetings involving the county's department heads, administrators, and elected officials. As a group we developed more than 80 recommendations to make our county more efficient, a better place to work, and a genuine asset to the lives of the public we serve.

The process also allowed the Board of Supervisors and County Administrative Officer John Michaelson to meet and establish the county's top priorities – fostering safe communities, proving a superior quality of life, and striving for open and accountable government.

We recognize that in order to move forward and accomplish the goals we have set for the county, we need support and commitment from the county's employees. That's why we have scheduled a series of employee forums to share the details of the ExCL Program and to hear your ideas for maintaining

ExCL as a tool for constantly improving ourselves and the work we do.

The forums will occur at the following times and places:

- January 24, 10 a.m. to noon AND 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Victorville PERC Office, 17270 Bear Valley Road, Victorville
- January 30, 10 a.m. to noon AND 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Lion Center West, 9161 Base Line Road, Rancho Cucamonga
- January 31, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Yucca Valley Community Center, 57090 Twentynine Palms Blvd., Yucca Valley
- February 7, 10 a.m. to noon AND 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Board of Supervisors Hearing Chambers, San Bernardino

Your supervisors are being asked to make you available to attend as part of your regular workday. You may read about ExCL on Countyline at <http://countyline/excl>.

When we began ExCL, there were few if any hints of the massive state budget crisis we face today. Setting priorities and having a clear focus are always essential, but never more than during times such as these.

Please join us as we plan for the future. Thank you. ♦

EXERCISE IN ETHICS

Ethics “Nicely” done

By Jim Pesta, Ethics Resource Officer

The holiday season was recently here, but is now gone. I remember several years ago, on a January day, a coworker of mine said, “Wow, I’m sure glad the holidays are over – I was getting really tired of being nice to people.” I wondered then, and I still wonder today, how many of us have felt that way?

What’s so hard about being nice? Why does it seem to take such extra effort for so many of us? Could it be that being *nice* places us in the position of being more concerned with other people than with ourselves? An interesting question, isn’t it?

As public servants, we are called to be concerned with others on a daily basis. Within this context, the question of being *nice* takes on a very wide dimension. Michael Josephson of the Josephson Institute for Ethics offers for reflection the *Five Principles of Public Service Ethics*:

Public Interest – Public office is a trust to be used only to advance public interests, not personal gain.

Objective Judgment – Decisions are to be made on the merits, free of partiality or prejudice and unimpeded by conflicts of interest.

Accountability – Government is to be conducted openly, efficiently, equitable and honorably so the public can make informed judgments and hold public officials accountable.

Democracy – Honor and respect democratic principles; observe the letter and spirit of laws.

Respectability – Safeguard public confidence in the integrity of government by avoiding appearances of impropriety and conduct unbefitting a public official.

These principles provide us with a clustering of values we can reflect upon and embrace in our endeavors as dedicated public servants. In support of them, we can hold onto the concept of **N.I.C.E.** as we flow through the holiday season, into, and through the New Year:

Nurture Newness – Be open to new ideas, thoughts and concepts relative to the way we do things. Embrace the notion that we all can be better and that we all can do better.

Invest in Integrity – Remain responsible to personal and professional integrity. Invest in activities that support and develop integrity such as ongoing education/training and personal/professional development.

Commit to Community – Engage in activities that will facilitate increased commitment to the larger community such as volunteer work in professional and/or charitable organizations.

Excel in Excellence – We determine our own attitude. Embrace the attitude of excellence in our workplace, families and community.

The New Year is now upon us. The spirit of the holiday season need not end the first week of January. Rather, it can be retained and remain with us. We can retain and nurture the spirit of the holidays in our everyday lives and work. As our journey continues, we can each strive to remain *nice*, today and tomorrow and throughout the entire new year of 2003. ♦

— Visit the County Ethics Office on Countyline at <http://countyline/>.



Hey, Dave Gibson cleaned JESD’s restrooms – in Barstow!!!

Have plunger will travel! With over 24 responses to the first “I want Dave Gibson to Clean my Restroom,” the request from the Barstow office of JESD to have “royalty clean their thrones,” was selected by Dave Gibson, Facilities Management Director.

Under the scrutiny of John Michaelson, County Administrative Officer, Keith Lee, Associate County Administrative Officer and Janice Eisenbeisz, the Director of JESD, Dave took on the challenge. Aided by the iron-fisted guidance of Supervising Custodian Albert Burgoz, Dave was able to complete the task to everybody’s satisfaction.

Brenda D’Errico submitted the winning entry on behalf of the Barstow office of JESD. Brenda, and all of the JESD staff graciously welcomed Dave and the other “Royals” to their office. After Dave finished his cleaning chores John Michaelson spoke with JESD and other County staff present of the benefits of interdepartmental cooperation. It was a fun-filled morning that everybody enjoyed.

Be on the look-out for the next thing that Dave wants to help you out with! ♦



Winter safety tips

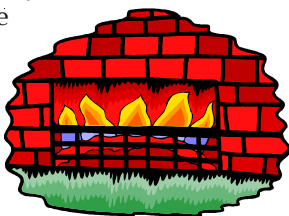
The months of December through March are among the coldest in San Bernardino County. As heating costs rise, we tend to rely on alternate sources of heating, such as the fireplace. Although the fireplace gives off a great deal of heat, some fireplaces are designed to lend a cozy atmosphere to a room, rather than heat an entire house. Accidents involving fireplaces and heating equipment are a major cause of home fires. Since 1974, in the State of California there have been over 8,500 fires directly related to the misuse or malfunction of a fireplace, with a damage loss estimated well over \$12 million. These fires have also resulted in the injuries to more than 50 firefighters and civilians alike. Most of these fires can be prevented.



Fire safety tips for fireplaces and other heating devices

- Have your chimney inspected by a professional before each heating season and cleaned regularly.

- Be sure to have a proper spark arrester on all chimney tops. These screens prevent burning embers from blowing out of the tops of the chimney. This may result in a fire on your roof or your neighbors', if they're covered with wooden shake shingles. Screens should have no more than 1/2 inch openings. If you have a



- If you have a manufactured fireplace, check with the manufacturer for installation requirements before placing anything on top of your fireplace.

- Never have a fireplace on when extreme wind conditions exist outside.

- Store paper, kindling, and other flammable material at least three feet from the fireplace.

- Store cooled ashes in a tightly sealed metal container. Cardboard boxes, paper bags, and plastic containers quickly catch fire. Even apparently cool ashes may contain enough heat to ignite these containers.

- Be sure that you have a fireplace screen in a place large enough to prevent flying embers and rolling logs from escaping onto your flooring.

- Never burn trash, paper, or green wood in your fireplace. These materials cause a combustible build-up on the lining of your fireplace that can eventually catch fire, and possibly damage the chimney and spread fire to your home.

- Make sure that your fire is out before leaving the house or going to bed.

- Before cold weather begins, change furnace filters prior to using the heaters. Place all space heaters at least three feet away from furniture, walls, curtains, or anything that burns. Make sure to turn them off when you leave home or go to bed. Contact the Gas Company or a heating contractor if you suspect that your heater is not functioning properly.

- Check vents periodically to make sure they are not blocked. Never install unvented gas heaters in bedrooms or bathrooms, where the small room size poses an added danger of rapid carbon monoxide build-up.

- Remember, charcoal barbecues are intended for outdoor use only! Charcoal produces deadly amounts of carbon monoxide gas that is odorless, tasteless, and invisible. Never use a charcoal barbecue to heat your home.

Before lighting any fire:

- Check to see that the flue is open.
- Keep a screen in front of the fireplace at all times, especially when fire is burning.

- Before closing the flue, be sure that the fire is completely out.

- Never dispose Christmas trees in the fireplace. The best alternative is to RECYCLE your tree through your local city or county program.

Check the phone directory for a professional fireplace contractor to assist you with any needs or questions you may have.

Make sure your home is equipped with working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Don't forget to install, test, and maintain these devices in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. **An approved smoke detector with fresh batteries, doubles your chances of surviving a fire in your home!**

Provide two means of escape from every room and make sure everyone knows where to meet after leaving the house. **Develop and practice a fire escape plan for your household. Remember, never return to a burning building for any reason. Your belongings can be replaced – you can't!** ♦



Have a SAFE and warm winter!